Roxbury, March 2, 1873.

Dear Wendell — After a winter of unremembered severity, it is something of relief — if not, at least for congratulation — that the months assigned to it by usage are gone, and we are now at the commencement of our Spring reckoning. Though the present outlook, with regard to ice and snow, is as wintry as ever, yet there is already a mild and an agreeable atmospheric change; and it will prove nature to be strangely "out of joint," should we not have an early spring culminating in an intensely warm summer and a most fruitful autumn. But as not even "Old Prob." has anything to say on this subject, I will not venture to make a single prediction.

For the past fortnight I have been suffering from an opthalmic inflammation in my right eye, — somewhat affecting the left one also, — which has made reading and writing a painful task, and compelled me to forego both to a considerable extent. It is now very

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much allayed, though I cannot yet see with my usual clearness. What bodily ailment ever comes at the right time or in the right place? My chronic inflammation of the spine remains intact, and is consciously with me when I rise up and when I lie down. If Harry's primary difficulty is hemmorhoidal, so is mine; and I am constantly weakened by loss of blood. Indeed, should a surgical examination be made, it is not unlikely that a fistula might be discovered, at least in process of formation. You will remember that my poor brother James was afflicted with one, which at last took the life out of him. Then, I am debilitated by the state of my kidneys, tending to a bad case of diabetes. In addition to these complaints, I get no relief from my catarrhal nuisance, which, causing an excessive discharge of blood and mucus through the nose, (the membrane of which is constantly inflamed,) causes dullness and inertia of the brain, and so greatly hinders mental labor.

Now, thus assailed at all points, you can easily understand why I have been so long little better than a mere "cumberer of the ground." I know how to sympathize with poor Harry in not being able to use the brain, to any extent, without great weariness and exhaustion. And you will remember, moreover, that for several years I have had a constant strain upon me in consequence of the paralyzed condition of your mother, which, by the watchful care she has needed, especially in her chamber, has prevented me from obtaining any unbroken night's sleep all that time, and, acting powerfully upon my sympathies and drawing steadily upon my physical powers, has constituted a dead weight upon my intellectual vigor and activity. Of course, I do not complain of this, for it has been to me a matter of the tenderest love as well as an imperative duty. But marvel not, in view of all these depressing concomitants, that I have shrunk from the difficult and arduous task of attempting to do, what

so many of my old friends and coadjutors so pressingly desire me to do — namely, to write my autobiography with reference to the anti-slavery struggle, covering a period of forty years' active conflict. Through the disinterested exertions of my friend Oliver Johnson, there now lies before me a fresh appeal of this nature, signed by weighty names; and what can or what ought I to say, and yet raise no expectations and cause no disappointments? "The spirit is willing" — to a certain extent — "but the flesh is weak" absolutely. I doubt if I shall at any time be able to do more than leave some reminiscences and sketches for you and my other children to dispose of as you may collectively think best. Yet I feel honored and gratified in the confidence in my truthfulness and impartiality implied in the appeal aforesaid. And if I only had health and spirit for the work —

"Give him but light, and Ajax asks no more."

Miss Dow leaves us next Saturday. Before Mrs. Kindle is positively engaged, it is certainly important that there should be a clear understanding between us. Thus—she may come for a three months trial, at $5.00 a week; she must have the oversight of the house, do some chamber work, help set the table as well as preside at it, do the family mending, perform what nursing your mother may require, sleep in the chamber with her, a considerable portion of the time to give me a chance to recuperate, help Katy in ironing, &c. I trust that she is not a bigot religiously, and that she has a cheerful and accommodating disposition, for such your mother needs; and, also, that she is neat in her person and in her work, and pleasant in her address. Unless your mother should be taken again seriously ill, her task will not be a heavy one; and I think she will like us all.

Let me know when she can positively come, and how I can transmit the money to pay her expenses to Boston. She had better come by the Shore Line.

Your mother is very much better, and down stairs as usual.

We have received two letters from Fanny within the last three days. They are all well as usual.

Love to all the dear ones.

From loving Father.

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